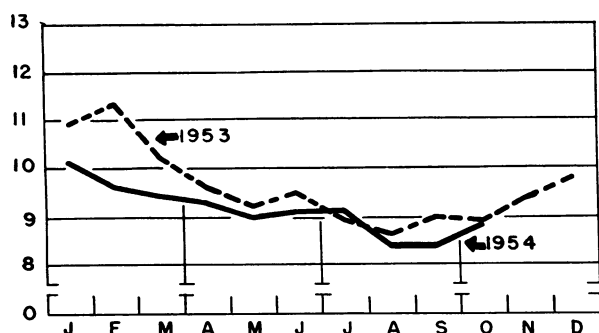
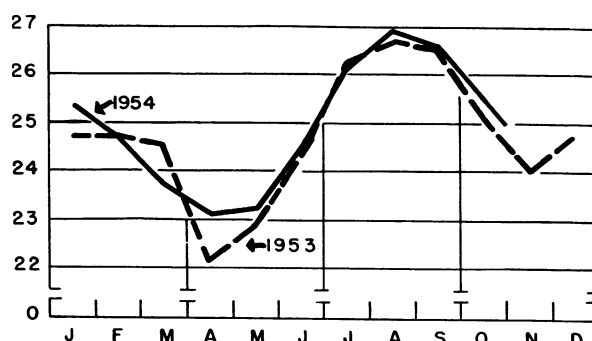


Deaths
per 1,000 population



Births
per 1,000 population



United States Vital Statistics, 1953-54

A new high for births and a new low for deaths appear very likely for 1954. Thus, the natural increase in the population of the United States—that is, births minus deaths—should be greater than for any previous year. Marriages in 1954 continued the decline which has been almost continuous since 1946. Divorces, which decreased sharply in the early postwar years, appear to be leveling off. These statements are based on provisional figures for States shown in the *Monthly Vital Statistics Report* for January–October 1954. Each month the figures are sent by State and local officials to the National Office of Vital Statistics, where they are used to obtain United States estimates.

Births

During the first 10 months of 1954, an estimated 3,344,000 births were registered, exceeding the number in these months of 1953 by 2.5 percent. If this lead is maintained for the rest of the year, about 4.0 million births will be registered, making 1954 the fourth successive

record-breaking year. Including unregistered births, the total will be 4.1 million.

In each year since the end of World War II, births have been at a considerably higher level than during the war or the immediately preceding years. Rising sharply after demobilization, the birth total (adjusted for under-registration) climbed from 2,858,000 in 1945 to a peak of 3,817,000 in 1947. It dipped slightly in 1948 and leveled off during the next 2 years. In 1951 the number of births again increased, and continued to rise in 1952, 1953, and the first 10 months of 1954.

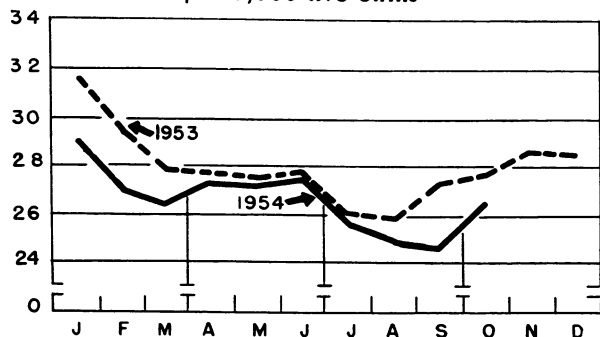
The birth rate per 1,000 population in 1953 was 25.1, and, according to present indications, will increase slightly—to 25.2—in 1954. The latter figure is the second highest in 28 years, and is only 5.3 percent below the postwar peak (26.6) in 1947. In 1940, by comparison, it was 19.4, and during the depression of the 1930's, it had dropped to 18.4.

Much of the increase in births in 1953 and 1954 can probably be attributed to a continuing rise in the number of third, fourth, and fifth children. Data on birth order for these years are not yet available, but it is not expected that they will show an increase in the number of first births because of falling marriage rates since 1951.

Prepared by the National Office of Vital Statistics, Public Health Service.

Infant Deaths

per 1,000 live births



The seasonal variation in the birth rate during 1953 and in the first 10 months of 1954 was quite marked and closely resembled the pattern in previous postwar years. The rates for the first 3 months of 1953 formed a minor peak. This was followed by a sharp drop in April to the year's low of 22.0. In the next few months, the rate rose to a high of 26.7 (in August) before declining again. In past years, the birth rate has generally dropped at the end of the year. However, between November and December 1953, there was a rise of 2.5 percent. These measures are not adjusted for under-registration because of the negligible effect of this factor on changes from month to month.

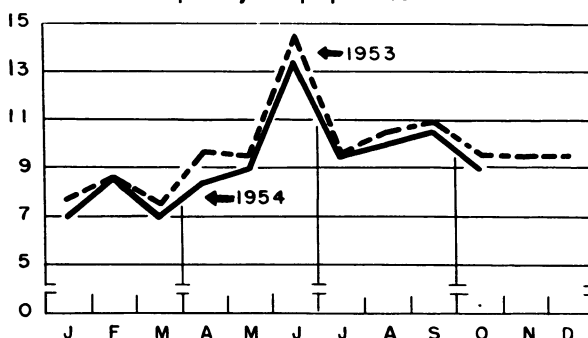
Deaths

During the past 5 years, 1949-53, the death rate has remained nearly stationary, varying only between 9.6 and 9.7 per 1,000 population. This pattern will be changed in 1954, judging from the unusually favorable mortality experience of the first 10 months. For the period January through October, the death rate (on an annual basis) was 9.1 for 1954, compared with the previous low of 9.6 recorded for 1950, 1951, 1952, and 1953. Unless mortality for the remaining 2 months should be unexpectedly high, the death rate for 1954 will be either 9.2 or 9.3.

The infant mortality rate (the number of deaths under 1 year per 1,000 live births) promises to be lower in 1954 than the year before, continuing the general downward trend. This rate

Marriages

per 1,000 population



for January-October was 26.6 in 1954, compared with the previous low of 27.9 in 1953.

The outstanding feature of the year 1954 was the absence of any reported outbreak of influenza. In each of the previous 4 years, there was an outbreak of influenza in the early part of the year. The most severe was in January and February of 1953, and the accompanying chart shows the very large number of deaths resulting from the widespread occurrence of influenza and other acute respiratory infections. The year 1954 was the first since 1949 in which no outbreak occurred, and as a consequence the death rates for the chronic cardiovascular diseases, as well as for influenza and pneumonia, have been relatively low.

Marriages

During the first 10 months of 1954, fewer marriages were reported than in the same period of 1953, and the marriage rate declined from 9.7 to 9.2 per 1,000 population. In previous years, the estimated marriage rates for the January-October period, based on provisional figures, have not varied greatly from the rates for the entire year, based on final returns.

The decline in marriages may in part be attributed to the low birth rates of the 1930 decade, with the result that there are fewer young people of marriageable age in the present decade.

Monthly estimates of marriages in the United States are based on figures on marriage licenses, intentions of marriage, and marriages by reporting month, available from the individual

Vital statistics: United States, 1952, 1953, and January–October 1954

Item	January–October			January–December		
	1954	1953	Percent change	1953	1952	Percent change
Number						
Live births:						
Registered.....	3, 344, 000	3, 262, 000	+ 2. 5	3, 909, 000	¹ 3, 846, 986	+ 1. 6
Adjusted for under-registration.....	3, 389, 000	3, 314, 000	+ 2. 3	3, 971, 000	¹ 3, 913, 000	+ 1. 5
Marriages.....	1, 227, 000	1, 282, 000	– 4. 3	1, 533, 000	1, 539, 318	–. 4
Deaths.....	1, 221, 000	1, 263, 000	– 3. 3	1, 519, 000	1, 496, 838	+ 1. 5
Infant deaths.....	88, 400	90, 500	– 2. 3	109, 100	109, 413	–. 3
Rate						
Live births:						
Registered.....	25. 0	24. 8	+ 0. 8	24. 7	¹ 24. 7	0
Adjusted for under-registration.....	25. 3	25. 2	+ . 4	25. 1	¹ 25. 1	0
Marriages.....	9. 2	9. 7	– 5. 2	9. 7	9. 9	– 2. 0
Deaths.....	9. 1	9. 6	– 5. 2	9. 6	9. 6	0
Infant deaths.....	26. 6	27. 9	– 4. 7	28. 0	28. 5	– 1. 8

¹ Based on a 50-percent sample.

NOTE: Deaths are exclusive of fetal deaths and of deaths among armed forces overseas. Data are final for 1952, and are estimated for 1953 and 1954. Birth, death, and marriage rates are per 1,000 population excluding armed forces overseas; infant mortality rates are per 1,000 live births and are adjusted for the changing numbers of births. All rates are on an annual basis. Population figures were furnished by the Bureau of the Census.

States. The estimating procedure is described in the January 1954 issue (vol. 3, No. 1) of the *Monthly Vital Statistics Report*.

Divorces

Figures on divorces available on a current basis from 25 areas show that the numbers of divorces in the first 9 months of 1954 are lag-

ging about 4 percent behind comparable totals for 1953. For 21 areas, the 1953 total was almost identical with that for 1952. During 1952, the estimated number of divorces and annulments in the United States was 392,000, and the rate was 2.5. This is in marked contrast to 1946, when divorces were estimated at 610,000 with a rate of 4.3 divorces per 1,000 persons, the largest number and rate for any year on record.

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